

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5731

As Amended by House, April 11, 2007

Title: An act relating to educating students in high demand fields.

Brief Description: Creating a committee on the education of students in high demand fields.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Shin, Delvin, Berkey, Sheldon, Tom, Oemig, Rasmussen, Pridemore, Roach, Jacobsen and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/14/07, 2/19/07 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/12/07, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5731 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Schoesler and Sheldon.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The state of Washington leads the nation in providing employment for people with baccalaureate degrees, but only ranks 36th in the nation in the production of degrees. Beginning in 2007, it is estimated that for job openings in Washington that require a bachelor's degree, 47 percent will be in fields identified as high demand or high impact, but that only 14 percent of Washington students each year graduate with degrees in one of these fields.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A committee on the education of students in high demand fields is established. The committee consists of: (1) two members of the House of Representatives; (2) two members of the Senate; (3) one person representing the Higher Education Coordinating Board; (4) one person representing the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; (5) one person representing the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and (6) one person representing each of the following: the labor council; the council of presidents; the prosperity partnership; the council of faculty representatives; an employer; and a graduate student member of the Washington student lobby.

The committee: (1) develops a plan to increase the capacity of Washington institutions of higher education by 10,000 students per year by 2020 to produce degrees in high impact, high

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demand areas of study; (2) develops a marketing project to inform students, parents, and educators of opportunities in high demand fields; (3) investigates ways to motivate students to take more mathematics and science courses; and (4) identifies ways that the business community can enter into more partnerships with the state to ensure that Washington institutions of higher education produce graduates in high demand fields that are ready and able to find employment in Washington. The committee reports its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2007.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We need to plan for the future in addition to responding to immediate needs. Fifteen percent of community and technical college enrollment is now in these high demand fields, so we must plan for increased transfers to four-year institutions. Seventy thousand people were recruited to Washington during the 1990s to fill job openings in high demand fields.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; J.W. Harrington, Council of Faculty Representatives; Loretta Seppanan, SBCTC; Jeff Gombosky, Prosperity Partnership; Angela Kerwin, Puget Sound Regional Council; Mike Bogatay, Associate Students of Central Washington University; Lew McMurran, Washington Software Alliance.

House Amendment(s): Specifies that the two Senators will be appointed by each major caucus, rather than the President of the Senate. Adds a representative from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to the committee. Provides that Senate Committee Services and the Office of Program Research will provide staff and logistical support.